

building BETTER LIVES

in the 29th District

Today, less than 2.5 percent of Washington's population receives welfare benefits. That's the lowest level in more than 30 years. From 1997 to 2002, the number of families on welfare has dropped 45 percent, from nearly 96,000 to 52,000.

While welfare rolls have gone down, the number of parents who have gotten jobs continues to rise. So we're **re-investing** the savings we've achieved into the things working parents need most to stay employed and get ahead in the job market. We've tripled the funds available to help struggling families afford **child care**. We've also boosted job training, work support, and tax credit education.

"I recently left my job for a better paying job with more hours and I love my newfound freedom!"

WorkFirst client

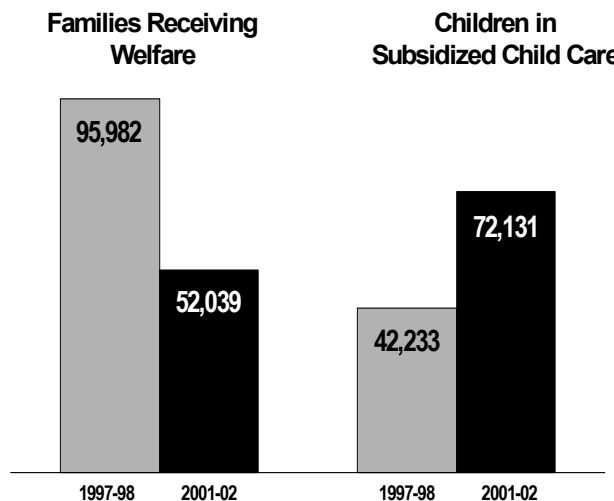
WASHINGTON
WorkFirst

WorkFirst is a partnership of four state agencies:

- Department of Social and Health Services
- Employment Security Department
- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
- Department of Trade and Economic Development

In addition, WorkFirst is a network of 32 local partnerships that include tribes, community organizations, community and technical colleges, workforce and economic development agencies, and individual citizens.

WorkFirst is Working!

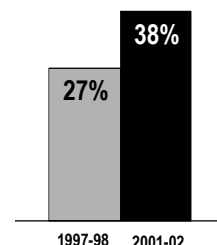


? How many parents are going to work?

More than 114,000 Washington WorkFirst parents got a job between August 1997 & September 2002.

In the 29th District alone, 5,173 parents got a job so they could provide for their family.

Percent of WorkFirst Parents Getting Jobs



For more information about the WorkFirst program, visit www.wa.gov/workfirst

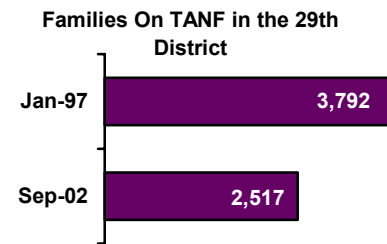
**A Job,
A Better Job,
A Better Life**

WorkFirst Facts:

? Are parents getting jobs and leaving welfare?

Yes. In January 1997, there were 95,982 families on public assistance in Washington. By September 2002, there were 52,039 on assistance – a 45 percent decrease.

In the 29th District, there were 3,792 families on public assistance in January 1997. By September 2002 there were 2,517, a **33.6 percent decrease.**

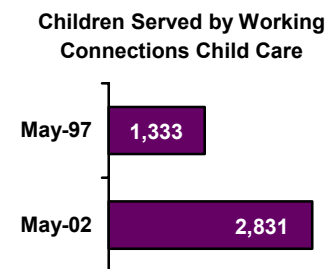


? How are working parents paying for child care?

Many are using Working Connections Child Care, a subsidy program for parents earning up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level – that's a monthly income of \$2,504 for a single parent with two children.

Parents contribute toward the cost of care based on a sliding scale with a monthly co-payment of at least \$15. In 1997-98, a monthly average of 42,233 children received a Working Connections Child Care subsidy. Five years later, 72,131 children were served, a 70.8 percent increase.

In the 29th District, there were 1,333 children receiving a child care subsidy in May 1997. In May 2002, 2,831 children were being served, a **112.4 percent increase.**



? How much child support is collected to help these parents?

In the past year, almost \$334 million was collected statewide on behalf of custodial parents who are or have been receiving welfare.

In the 29th District, more than \$10.5 million was collected.

? Is training and education available?

Yes. WorkFirst supports training and education for low-income parents working at least 20 hours per week, including those who have left the welfare rolls.

Last year **in your area,** 837 low-income parents enrolled in pre-employment training, which are specialized, short-term (up to 12 week) courses developed with specific employers who commit to giving first consideration to hiring those who complete the training. Another 977 low-income parents received free tuition at a community or technical college, and 368 enrolled in "Families That Work" (basic skills, job-readiness, family management, and parenting skills).

? What is WorkFirst doing to help parents keep their job or get a better job?

Once participants go to work — even if they earn enough to leave assistance — WorkFirst continues to support them with training opportunities, job referrals, child care subsidies, transportation, food assistance, and medical coverage.

In addition, the WorkFirst Post-Labor Exchange (WPLEX) call center contacts newly employed parents to offer retention services, referrals to higher wage jobs, and training at the local community or technical college. Last year, WPLEX made 10,850 referrals to better jobs, training opportunities or other work-related supports.

In the 29th District, 209 parents were referred to better jobs and/or training last year.